

some of the testing methods used to determine if certain toys are risks to children. The article quotes Robert Garrett, acting director of the lab: "I walk out of here every day thinking we're made the world a better place," adding, "I am not sure every government agency can say that."

As the new Chairman of the VA-HUD Independent Agency Appropriations Subcommittee, which has jurisdiction over the CPSC, I am delighted to read about Federal employees who are so devoted to the mission of their agency.

I commend this article to my colleagues.

[From the New York Times, December 25, 1998]

IN PARADISE OF TOYS, THE GAME PLAN IS TO SAVE LIVES

WASHINGTON, Dec. 24.—In the Washington suburb of Gaithersburg, Md., far from the intrigue of the capital and even farther from the North Pole, employees of the Consumer Product Safety Commission test toys of every description for dangers and defects.

Bob Hundemer, an engineering technician, has tested toys at the agency for two decades. He has cultivated a scrupulous and unforgiving eye for potential hazards and quickly detects whether a toy is up to standard—whether it is safe as well as inviting beneath the Christmas tree.

"This is a killer," Mr. Hundemer said, pointing to a fluorescent yellow rattle with an unusually thin stem and tiny ball at the tip. "The end could get jammed in a baby's mouth so easily and cause choking."

Mr. Hundemer's office is a 5-year-old's paradise. A bookcase overflowing with brightly colored tops, dolls, toy cars, and jacks-in-the-box covers the back wall. A sign reading "Caution: Adults at Play" adorns his door.

Robert Garrett, the acting director of the engineering laboratory, said: "After years in the private sector, I realized that I could get a job with the Government doing about the same thing. I thought I'd died and gone to heaven."

At the annual Toy Fair in February, giant manufacturers like Mattel and Hasbro, as well as small toy companies from around the country, gather in New York City to display their wares. Representatives from the commission attend the show and examine all the new toys. They discuss potential problems with the manufacturers and then work with them to insure that potential hazards are eliminated.

"The big retailers don't want to recall their products," said Kathleen P. Begala, the commission's director of public affairs. "With mailings and bad press, it's a very expensive process for them, and so there is an incentive to cooperate with us."

Mindful that injuries kill more children than any illnesses, the agency, which has requested just over \$57 million for its 2000 budget, performs four tests on toys it reviews.

One, the template test, examines small parts of a toy that could catch in a child's throat and affect breathing. Mr. Hundemer uses a truncated cylinder that represents an average child's mouth and throat. Any piece of a toy that fits into the cylinder is considered dangerous.

The sharp-edge test uses a special tape to indicate whether any side of an object could cut the skin.

The force test determines how easily parts of the stuffed animals, like eyes and noses, can be removed from the toy. Mr. Hundemer uses an instrument that resembles pliers to grasp the eye of a stuffed toy, for example, and applies 15 pounds of pressure, about the strength of a 2-year-old. He tries to rip off the part for about 20 seconds.

In the impact test, a toy is dropped four and a half feet to test durability. "We use something pretty cheap," Mr. Hundemer said. "It's called gravity." If pieces of the toy break off, and the shards of plastic fail the template test, the toy is considered not safe.

The commission officially approves toys that survive the tests.

Like veterans telling war stories, Ms. Begala and Mr. Hundemer recalled some of the most troublesome toys. They remembered the Cabbage Patch doll accused of "eating" a child's hair, the Chinese slap bracelets made with cloth and sharp metal that could cut a child and Woody, the cowboy with plastic spurs that had sharp edges and a small plastic badge.

Mr. Hundemer added that this year's hot toy, the Furby, was safe.

"People shopping for toys need to be sure that toys do not contain parts smaller than their child's fist," Mr. Hundemer said.

Mr. Garrett mused happily on his career.

"I walk out of here every day thinking we've made the world a better place," he said.

Then, pausing, he added, "I am not sure every government agency can say that."

CONGRESSIONAL COMMISSION ON SERVICEMEMBERS AND VETERANS TRANSITION ASSISTANCE

HON. LANE EVANS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 1999

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be an original cosponsor of the "Servicemembers and Veterans Transition Services Improvement Act of 1999." This measure contains the improvements in benefits and services for America's service members and veterans recommended by the Congressional Commission on Servicemembers and Veterans Transition Assistance.

By way of background, the Commission was established by Public Law 94-275 and was directed to review the programs and benefits designed to facilitate the transition from military service to civilian life for those who have served in uniform. The Commission was encouraged to be thorough in its analysis of existing programs and to be bold in its recommendations for program changes and improvements. Without question, the Commission has met those challenges and transmitted to Congress a meticulous examination of transition programs in place today and an impressive list of recommendations to improve and enhance those existing programs and benefits.

Many of the Commission's proposals, particularly those related to veterans' education and training, can serve as a blueprint for the 106th Congress. Of particular interest to me is the recommendation to significantly increase and expand educational opportunities under the Montgomery GI Bill. I agree with the Commission's statement that education "... is the most valuable benefit our Nation can offer the men and women whose military service preserves our liberty." I know from first hand experience the benefits of these educational benefits and I look forward to discussing this and the Commission's other initiatives in depth during upcoming hearings.

I want to commend Tony Principi, chairman of the Transition Commission, and all of the

Commissioners for their excellent service, dedication, and hard work on behalf of America's servicemembers and veterans.

There will be those who will say the recommendations made by the Transition Commission are too costly. If we value a strong defense and believe our Armed Forces and society in general will reap real benefits from the service of our best and brightest in our military, we cannot afford not to improve the transition benefits we offer to those who serve our nation in uniform.

CONGRESSMAN PETE STARK PROFILED IN U.U. WORLD

HON. WILLIAM J. COYNE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 1999

Mr. COYNE. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following remarks for the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. The magazine U.U. World, which is published by the Unitarian Universalist Church, recently published a profile of Congressman PETE STARK, my long-time Ways and Means colleague. The article highlights some of Congressman STARK's concerns about the effects of welfare reform. I believe many of us share those concerns. I commend this article to my colleagues' attention.

[From the U.U. World, Jan./Feb. 1999]

A STARK ASSESSMENT: U.S. REP. PETE STARK SPEAKS OUT ON HEALTH CARE AND WELFARE REFORM

(By David Reich)

When President Clinton signed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, more commonly known as the welfare reform bill, U.S. Rep. Fortney Pete Stark didn't make a secret of his displeasure. "The president sold out children to get reelected. He's no better than the Republicans," fumed Stark, a longtime Unitarian Universalist whose voting record in Congress regularly wins him 100 percent ratings from groups like the AFL-CIO and Americans for Democratic Action.

One of the Congress's resident experts on health and welfare policy, the northern California Democrat has earned a reputation for outspokenness, often showing a talent for colorful invective, not to say name-calling. First elected to the House as an anti-Vietnam War "bomb-thrower" (his term) in 1972, Stark has called Clinton healthcare guru Ira Magaziner "a latter-day Rasputin" and House Speaker Newt Gingrich "a messianic megalomaniac." When the American Medical Association lobbied Congress to raise Medicare payments to physicians, Stark, who chaired the Health Subcommittee of the powerful House Ways and Means Committee, called them "greedy troglodytes," unleashing a \$600,000 AMA donation to Stark's next Republican opponent.

"I've gotten in a lot of trouble speaking my mind," the congressman admits with a rueful smile. For all his outspokenness on politics, Stark appears to have a droll sense of himself, and he tends to talk softly, his voice often trailing off at the ends of phrases or sentences.

Back in the 1960s, as a 30-something banker and nominal member of the Berkeley, California, Unitarian Universalist congregation, Stark upped his commitment to the U.U. movement after his minister asked him to give financial advice to Berkeley's Starr King School for the Ministry. "I think I was